

Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC)

Individual Certification/Compliance Information

Effective July 1, 2004, each member of each fire department operating in this state must receive a minimum level of training as specified by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. There are three (3) additional recognized levels of state certification. They are Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Inspector, and Fire Investigator. The state certified firefighter level has been expanded to allow volunteer and part-time firefighters to be certified. For volunteers and part-time firefighters, the state certification is optional.

I. VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Volunteer Support Firefighter

Those volunteer firefighters who are limited as to their function and do not participate in activities which may require them being in close proximity to any hazardous zone.

Minimum Training:

Satisfactorily complete the Georgia Basic Support Firefighter Training Course or equivalent.

Individuals who have received training that is equivalent or exceeds the Georgia Basic Support Firefighter Training Course and records maintained by the fire department validate this training; the fire chief may submit a completed "Verification of Training Form" to this agency for credit consideration.

Continued Annual Training:

At this time there are no annual training requirements for non-state certified volunteer firefighters established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC).

Volunteer Firefighter

"Volunteer" means not employed for compensation by but appointed and regularly enrolled to serve as a firefighter for any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

Minimum Training:

Those **appointed prior to July 1, 2004** must hold valid certificates of training for one of the following:

- FDC 101 Basic Firefighter or,
- Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course or,
- Georgia Basic Firefighter or,
- NPQ Firefighter I

Individuals who have received training that is equivalent to or exceeding any of the courses listed above and records maintained by the fire department validate this training,

the fire chief may submit a completed “Verification of Training Form” for credit consideration.

Those **appointed July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005** must satisfactorily complete the Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course.

Those **appointed July 1, 2005, and later** must satisfactorily complete the Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course and have completed a live-fire course taught by or through the Georgia Fire Academy. For credit from the Council, the live-fire component will meet the following conditions:

1. The live-fire component shall be taught by the Georgia Fire Academy **or** by instructors who have completed an apprenticeship as a live-fire instructor with the Georgia Fire Academy.
2. The live-fire component must be instructed in accordance with NFPA 1403 and the applicable EPD regulations.
3. The Module-1 component must be completed prior to the live-fire evolution.
4. Delayed implementation of the live-fire component until July 1, 2005, so that a cadre of firefighters who have completed the live-fire training and apprenticeship program is developed.

Continued Annual Training:

At this time there are no annual training requirements for non-state certified volunteer firefighters established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC). Please note that Insurance Services Office (ISO) requirements are not affected by GFSTC decisions.

II. PART-TIME FIREFIGHTERS

“Part-time” means employed for compensation on less than a full-time basis by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

Minimum Training:

Those appointed prior to July 1, 2004 must hold valid certificates of training for one of the following:

- FDC 101 Basic Firefighter or,
- Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course or,
- Georgia Basic Firefighter or,
- NPQ Firefighter I

Individuals who have received training that is equivalent or exceeds any of the courses listed above and records maintained by the fire department validate this training, the fire chief may submit a completed “Verification of Training Form” to this agency for credit consideration.

Those **appointed July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005** must satisfactorily complete the Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course.

Those **appointed July 1, 2005, and later** must satisfactorily complete the Module 1 of the Georgia Basic Firefighter Course and have completed a live-fire course taught by or through the Georgia Fire Academy.

Continued Annual Training:

At this time there are no annual training requirements for non-state certified part-time firefighters established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC). Please note that Insurance Services Office (ISO) requirements are not affected by GFSTC decisions.

III. STATE CERTIFIED FIREFIGHTERS

“Full-time” means employed for compensation on a basis of at least 40 hours per week by any municipal, county, state, or private incorporated fire department.

Full-time firefighters are required to be state certified. Effective 07/01/2004, volunteers and part-time firefighters may choose to be state certified.

Firefighter Certification Requirements: O.C.G.A. 25-4-8

1. At least 18 years of age;
2. Not have been convicted of a felony within 10 years prior to employment; There is an exception: Firefighters who have been convicted of a felony and have participated in the Georgia Department of Corrections Firefighter program may be state certified providing certain provision have been met. Refer to O.C.G.A. 25-4-8 (2) for specifics.
3. Have good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the council;
4. Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record;
5. Be in good physical condition as determined by a medical examination and successfully pass the minimum physical agility requirements established by the Council;
6. Possess, or achieve within 12 months after employment, a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.

Minimum Training:

The minimum training requirement for state certified firefighter is the Georgia Basic Firefighter Training Course as taught by the Georgia Fire Academy. Satisfactory completion of the firefighter certification written examination is required. Training equivalent to or exceeding the Georgia Basic Firefighter Training Course may be accepted if the following conditions apply:

- The fire chief of the fire department and GFSTC recognizes and accepts the training
- The completion date of the recognized training course does not exceed 60 months
- The firefighter certification written examination is challenged and passed.

Firefighter Re-certification Procedure:

Firefighter re-certification will consist of two components:

1. **A demonstration of certain core skills/knowledge** to maintain proficiency and
2. **A continued training/education component** to advance a firefighter's level of knowledge and ability.

The **core competency** portion would be subject to the following conditions:

1. The competencies would be based on objectives specified in NFPA Firefighter 1 (the same as *The Georgia Basic Training Course*). The recommended list of core competencies is accessible from our website or available upon request.
2. All non-administrative firefighters are required to demonstrate/perform the specified competencies annually.
3. The local department shall determine the method for completion of the competencies. Methods may include drills, training based scenarios, check-off exercises, etc. (An optional method of recording core competencies is available on our website)
4. The local fire department is to notify GFSTC annually of those individuals who have completed the core competencies.
5. GFSTC may verify completion of competencies by conducting skills tests at fire departments as is deemed necessary.
6. Fire service members may be designated by the local fire chief as administrative staff and are not required to complete core competencies but do have additional annual training requirements.

The **continued annual training** component is subject to the following conditions:

1. Every non-administrative firefighter, in addition to annual completion of core competencies, is required to complete a minimum of 24 hours training at a class/training session pre-accepted by GFSTC.
2. Administrative staff is not required to complete annual core competencies but is required to complete 40 hours of training at a classes/training sessions pre-accepted by GFSTC.
3. The local fire chief may choose **not** to designate anyone as administrative staff and select to complete the same requirements as non-administrative personnel.
4. Training that is conducted to meet the re-certification requirements must be conducted in a professional organized manner and meet specific criteria defined by GFSTC.

IV. STATE CERTIFIED FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY EDUCATORS

Anyone employed as a Fire and Life Safety Educator, or anyone who seeks recognition as a Fire and Life Safety Educator must meet the education and training requirements as established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. The following describes those requirements as approved by the Council.

Fire and Life Safety Educators Certification Requirements:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.

2. Not have been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction within ten years prior to employment/appointment and never convicted of a felony for a crime against a minor.
3. Have a good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the Council. The same procedure for determining good moral character for firefighters will be used for Fire and Life Safety Educators as well.
4. Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record.
5. Possess or achieve within 12 months after employment/appointment a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.
6. Complete a Fire and Life Safety Educator basic training course approved by the Council.

The required minimum Initial Training for Fire and Life Safety Educators is the current Fire and Life Safety Educator Course as offered by the Georgia Fire Academy.

Fire and Life Safety Educator Re-certification Procedure:

The Fire and Life Safety Educator should demonstrate the ability to perform basic educator skills, which is reported to this agency by one of two methods. Fire departments may indicate on the GFSTC report that the Educator has performed basic educator skills (core competencies) during the calendar year or submit a letter under the signature of the Fire Chief or his/her designees stating these skills have been demonstrated. In addition, the Educator must have a minimum of at least 24 hours of training in GFSTC accepted training program(s) annually.

Recognition of Incumbents - Anyone who has completed the 24 hour FSE Training Program or who holds a national certification at the Fire and Life Safety Educator 1 level and who has completed the employment requirements specified is deemed as having met the initial training and employment requirements for Fire and Life Safety Educator will be issued a certificate as such.

V. STATE CERTIFIED FIRE INSPECTORS

Effective July 1, 2004, anyone employed as a Fire Inspector, or anyone who seeks the recognition as a Fire Inspector must meet the education and training requirements as established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. The following describes those requirements as approved by the Council.

1. Anyone employed or who seeks a state certificate, as a Fire Inspector must meet the following qualifications:
2. Be at least 18 years of age.
3. Not have been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction within ten years prior to employment/appointment.
4. Have a good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the council. The same procedure for determining good moral character for firefighters will be used for Fire Inspectors as well.

5. Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record.
6. Possess or achieve within 12 months after employment/appointment a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.
7. Complete a Fire Inspector basic training course approved by the Council.

The Required Minimum Initial Training for Fire Inspectors is the current Fire Inspector I Course as taught by the Georgia Fire Academy. In addition, as a prerequisite to entering the Fire Inspector I course, a candidate must complete a firefighter basic training program or a 16-hour course on basic fire service principles.

Fire Inspector Re-certification Procedure:

The Fire Inspector should demonstrate the ability to perform basic inspector skills, which is reported to this agency by one of two methods. Fire departments may indicate on the GFSTC report that the Inspector has performed basic inspector skills (core competencies) during the calendar year or submit a letter under the signature of the Fire Chief or his/her designees stating these skills have been demonstrated. In addition, the Inspector must have a minimum of at least 24 hours of training in GFSTC accepted training program(s) annually.

Recognition of Incumbents - Anyone who has completed training equivalent to the current 40-hour Fire Inspector I Course as taught by the Georgia Fire Academy (as determined by the Authority having jurisdiction) and successfully completed the Fire Inspector I written exam and who has completed the employment requirements specified above, is deemed as having met the initial training and employment requirements for Fire Inspector and will be issued a certificate as such.

The following national certifications are accepted as equivalent:

- NPQ certified Fire Inspector
- ICC certified Fire Inspector
- SBCCI certified Fire Inspector
- NFPA certified Fire Inspector

VI. STATE CERTIFIED FIRE INVESTIGATORS

Effective July 1, 2004, anyone employed as a Fire Investigator, or anyone who seeks the recognition as a Fire Investigator must meet the education and training requirements as established by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. The following describes those requirements as approved by the Council.

Anyone employed or who seeks a state certificate, as a Fire Investigator must meet the following qualifications:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Not have been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction.
3. Have a good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the council.

4. Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record.
5. Possess or achieve within 12 months after employment/appointment a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.
6. Complete the Arson Investigations Level 1 and Level 2 training courses taught by the Georgia Police Academy.

The Required Minimum Initial Training for Fire Investigators is the Arson Investigations Level 1 and Level 2 Courses as taught by the Georgia Police Academy.

Fire Investigator Re-certification Procedure:

The Fire Investigator should demonstrate the ability to perform basic investigation skills, which is reported to this agency by one of two methods. Fire departments may indicate on the GFSTC report that the Investigator has performed basic investigation skills (core competencies) during the calendar year or submit a letter under the signature of the Fire Chief or his/her designees stating these skills have been demonstrated. In addition, the Investigator must have a minimum of at least 24 hours of training in GFSTC accepted training program(s) annually.

Recognition of Incumbents - Anyone who has completed both of the Arson Investigation Courses and who has completed the employment requirements specified is deemed as having met the initial training requirements for Fire Investigator and will be issued a certificate as such.

VII. GFSTC ACCEPTED TRAINING FOR RE-CERTIFICATION

Re-certification for state certified Firefighters, Fire and Life Safety Educators, Fire Inspectors, and Fire Investigators consists of two (2) parts, core competencies and continued annual training. The only exception is the administrative staff (firefighter level only) designated by the fire chief. Administrative staff are individuals who do not participate in physical duties as those identified in the core competencies. As an example, designated administrative staff will not don PPE and perform fire suppression duties. Administrative staff are not required to demonstrate annual core competencies, but the continued annual training increases from 24 to 40 hours.

There are currently four (4) methods in which certified Firefighters, Fire and Life Safety Educators, Fire Inspectors, and Fire Investigators may accrue continued annual training credit (re-certification hours).

1. Certificates issued by state and national agencies for training that is applicable for the defined level of certification is accepted. For example, Georgia Fire Academy, Department of Homeland Security/Georgia Emergency Management Agency, National Fire Academy, etc. are accepted.
2. Fire Departments who have purchased the instructional package from one of the 3 basic firefighter-training manuals approved by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council and have a qualified instructor may accrue re-certification

hours. The 3 GFSTC approved manuals are the Essentials of Firefighting by IFSTA, the Firefighter's Handbook by Delmar, and the Fundamentals of Fire Fighter Skills by Jones and Bartlett. To receive re-certification credit, the local training records must be maintained indicating the issued GFSTC course number as well as good record keeping practices. Course numbers by chapter for the GFSTC approved training manuals may be found on our website at WWW.GFSTC.GEORGIA.GOV or by contacting our office. Good record keeping practices include the GFSTC course number, a description of the training, course objectives, student's names and signatures, instructor name and signature, with dates and times.

3. Classes, courses, and schools developed and delivered locally by qualified instructors may be accepted. The fire chief or his/her designee must submit a completed "Course Credit Request Form" for acceptance. As these courses are accepted, GFSTC will issue a course number. The fire department must in turn maintain training records tracking each individual's progress using the course number and good record keeping practices.
4. Fire service associations may also submit a Course Credit Request Form for credit for attendees. GFSTC in conjunction with the Educators, Inspectors, Investigators, Firefighters, and Fire Chiefs associations in this state have developed accepted practices to use for credit. In affect, the respective association submits a Course Credit Request Form to GFSTC who in turn issues a course number. In addition, assurances must be made that training occurs, attendees are present, and the training is applicable for the level(s) of certification credited.

VIII. STATE CERTIFIED AIRPORT FIREFIGHTER (ARFF)

Airport firefighter means any person assigned to any airport located in this state who performs the duties of aircraft fire fighting or rescue.

Airport means any airport located in this state, which has regularly scheduled commercial air carrier service, or commuter airline service as required for certification under Section 139.49 of the Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Airport Rescue Firefighter Certification Requirements:

1. At least 18 years of age;
2. Not have been convicted of a felony within 10 years prior to employment;
3. Have good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the council;
4. Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record;
5. Be in good physical condition as determined by a medical examination and successfully pass the minimum physical agility requirements as established by the council;

6. Possess, or achieve within 12 months after employment, a high school diploma or a general education development equivalency.

Minimum Training:

The minimum training requirement for state certified airport firefighter is the Georgia Basic Airport Rescue Firefighter Training Course.

Airport Firefighter Re-certification Procedure:

ARFF re-certification will consist of two components:

3. **A reevaluation of defined performance skills** annually.
4. **A written examination** administered annually

Note: Senate Bill 308 was passed and signed into law in 2005. Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council now has the authority and responsibility for establishing minimum certification, training, and re-certification requirements for Airport Firefighters. As procedures are established, GFSTC will notify all affected fire departments.

IX. GOOD MORAL CHARACTER PROCEDURE

Good Moral Character Procedure:

O.C.G.A. 25-4-8 specifies the requirements for employed or certified firefighters, educators, inspectors, and investigators. One of the requirements listed requires that an employed or certified individual have “good moral character” as determined by investigation under procedure approved by the Council. The procedure approved by the Council requires that good moral behavior be assessed by the candidate’s behavior as shown on a criminal history background report. More specifically, the local fire department should assess the information included on fingerprint search reports or GCIC and NCIC reports, to determine the status of the candidate’s criminal history. Those whose histories don’t show a recent pattern of convictions of crimes involving stealing, cheating, or lying will be considered as having met the “good moral character” provision. This is verified through a statement signed by the local fire chief or his/her designee attesting that he/she has investigated the criminal history of the firefighter and has determined that the candidate is of good moral character. This statement is included as part of the Certification Package.

X. NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEM (NPQS) CERTIFICATIONS

Multiple levels of NPQ(S) certifications are available to fire service personnel in this state who meet established prerequisite training and testing requirements. There is no distinction between volunteer, part-time, or career status for national (NPQ) certifications. There are components of various NPQ examinations that are used within the state certification requirements. For example, the written NPQ exam and the required written exam for state firefighter certification is the same. The difference being, with national certification the skills or practical examination is required, and with state certification additional requirements such as criminal history investigation, good moral character, high

school diploma or GED, etc. is necessary. For additional information, visit the GFSTC website or contact our office.

XI. DOCUMENTATION

Forms may be found on our website at WWW.GFSTC.GEORGIA.GOV or by contacting our office at 478-993-4521.

Volunteer Fire Department Personnel Roster:

The Volunteer Fire Department Personnel Roster is used to notify this agency of volunteers, and/or part-time firefighters currently assigned to the fire department that have received certificates of training that meets or exceeds the established minimum training requirements.

Volunteer Firefighter Verification of Training Form:

As of July 1, 2004 each member of every fire department must have a minimum level of training as specified by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council. GFSTC will recognize previous training if it is adequately documented in departmental records and the documented training meets or exceeds minimum requirements. This form is to be used to verify this previous training.

Certification Package:

GFSTC approved a new method for individuals to apply state firefighter, fire and life safety educator, fire inspector, fire investigator, and airport firefighter certifications. Those seeking certification must submit the required certification data to GFSTC via the appropriate Certification Package. The Certification Package will enable firefighters/fire departments to clearly see what information is required for state certification and allows that information to be submitted in a neat and efficient manner. Career firefighters, educators, inspectors, investigators, and airport firefighters are required to be state certified. Volunteers and part-time personnel may choose to seek state certification. The certification package is to be used by individuals who have never been state certified or whose certification has lapsed for more than 12 months.

Lateral Transfer/Rehire Form:

Certified individuals who move from one fire department to another or are rehired within 1 year of the termination date may use the lateral transfer/rehire form providing the “new” department chooses to accept previous hiring requirements from the previous department.

Certification Short Form:

For Individuals who have meet all requirements and are currently state certified, the short form is available for transferring or adding additional certification(s) providing all requirements are met and documentation is submitted.

Change of Status Form:

The change of status form is to be used to notify GFSTC of any change of status for fire department personnel. Examples include:

- Adding personnel to the fire department

- Deleting or terminating personnel from the fire department
- Placing personnel on medical leave
- Personnel returning from medical leave
- Placing personnel on military leave
- Personnel returning from military leave

Note: The Council has approved medical and military leave as approved leaves of absences. The required continuing annual training (re-certification hours) will be pro-rated for personnel on approved leave of absence.